

An Edwardian Summer

BY

John S. Goodall

WITH A FOREWORD BY

HAROLD MACMILLAN

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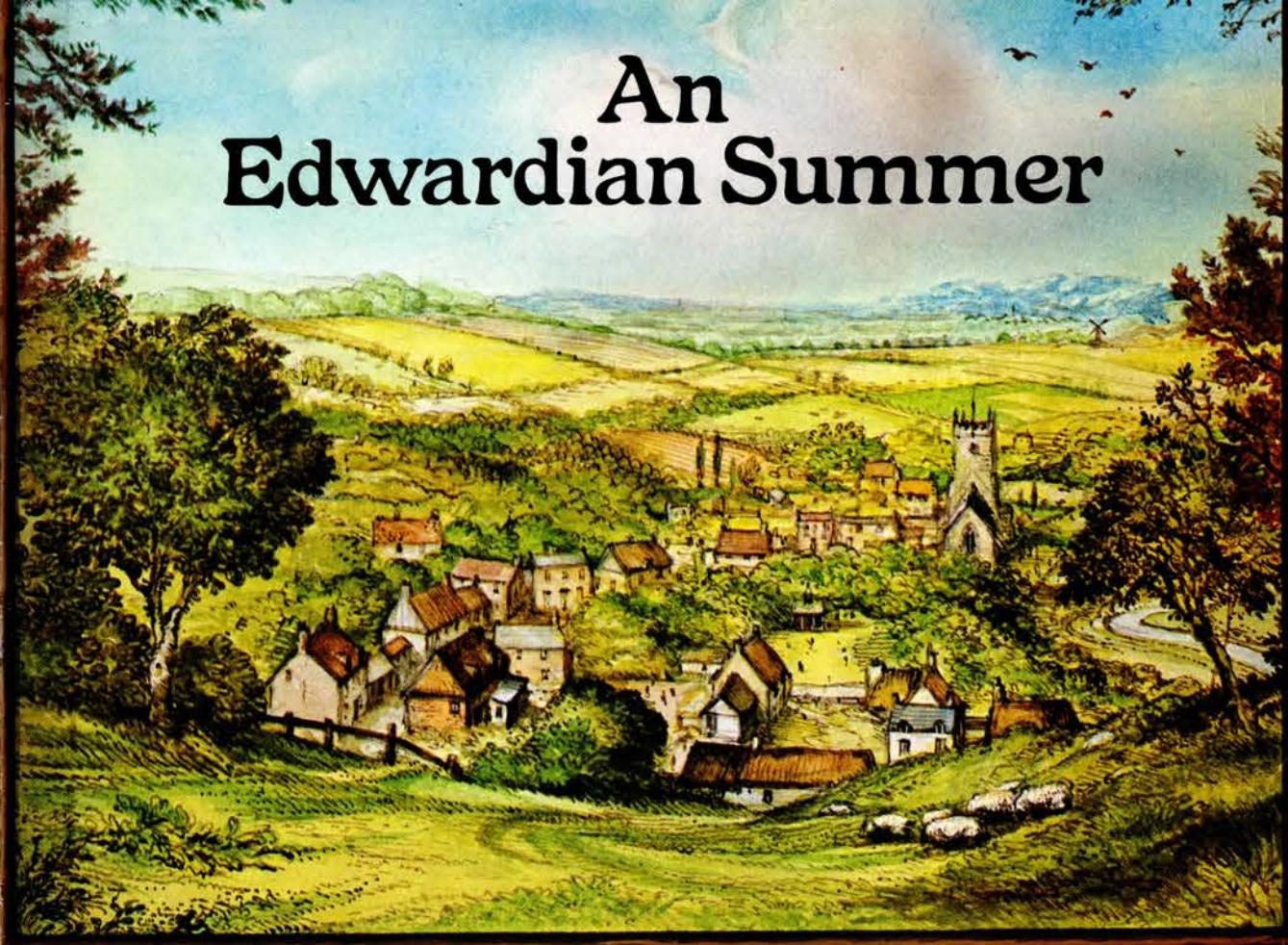
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An Edwardian Summer



*For Margaret
with love*

Foreword
by

HAROLD MACMILLAN

Why do we look back with such indulgent nostalgia upon the brief era of Edward the Seventh (1901-1910), the period depicted in this book, for it is not, perhaps, one of the more exciting periods in our island's history?

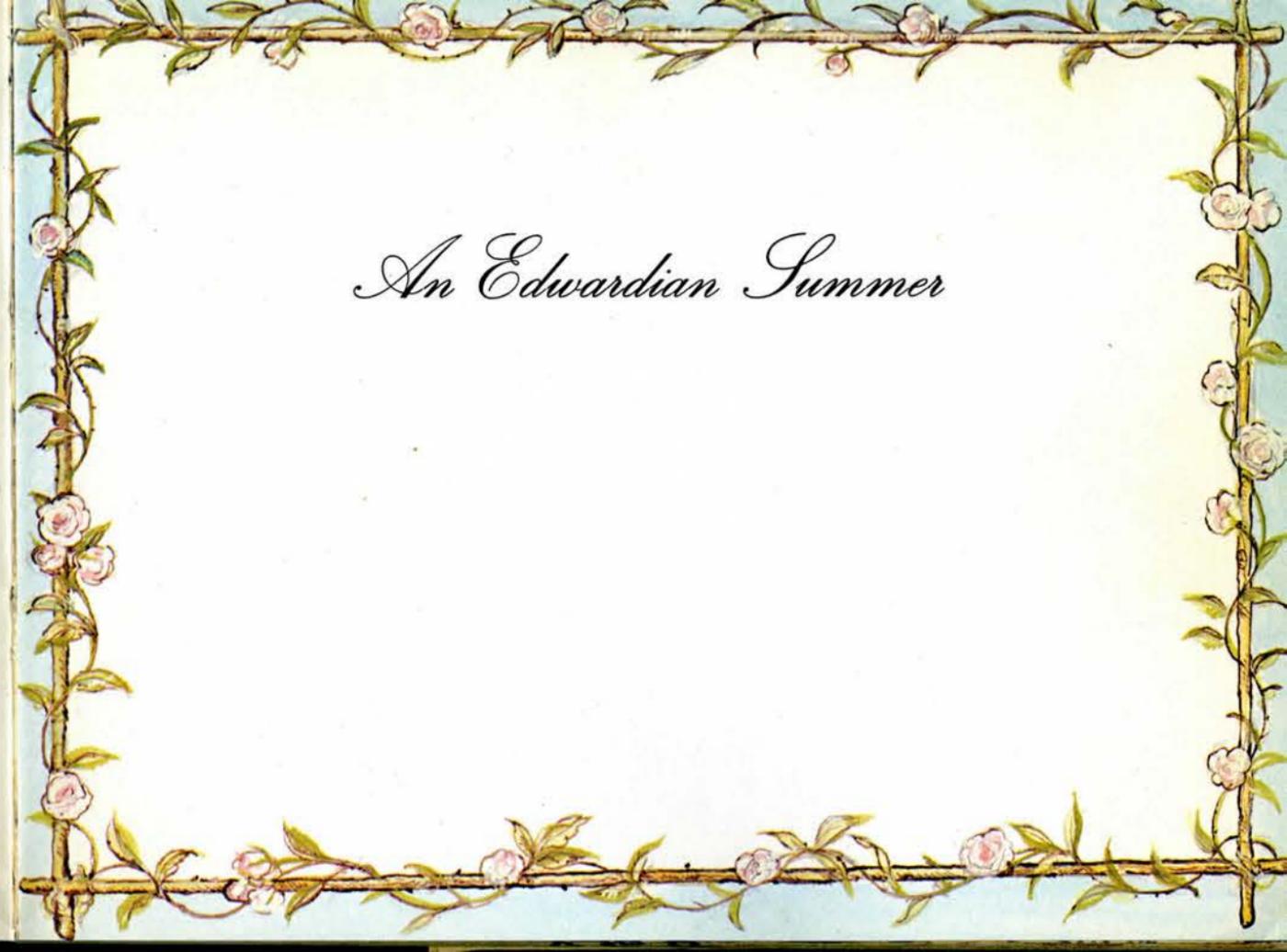
For those of us who remember it, the Edwardian summer was an Indian summer, the last 'warm spell' of the Victorian Pax Britannica before the First World War engulfed us all and almost destroyed our generation. Historians, with their unlovable habit of seeing in retrospect what we could not see at the time, may say that it was an age built upon illusions, and it is true that our fond belief that our world, no doubt with continual if small changes for the better, would last for ever was the greatest of illusions.

But the peace and the sense of security which we enjoyed were not

illusions. We really were at peace, we really did feel secure in the world which John Goodall has so charmingly and accurately portrayed in this book. And if some reader (or whatever may be the term for one who peruses a book without words) should be so jaundiced as to feel that perhaps things were not always quite so rosy as the artist has painted them, he should remind himself that this is an Edwardian *summer*. There were also Edwardian winters when our young hero and heroine sat rubbing their chilblained fingers in the draughty classroom, the kitchenmaid's arms were raw to the elbows and the Spaniard with the dancing bear was lucky to get a halfpenny for his bread. Yet in due course summer would return and the world would take a small turn for the better. The darker side of Edwardian England cast but the smallest of shadows upon the general sense of confidence and peace.

An obscure Greek historian born in the still more obscure city of Aeolian Kyme was anxious that his birthplace should make a good figure in his history of the world. But, alas, nothing of note had ever happened there. So he proudly stated : 'during this period the people of Aeolian Kyme enjoyed undisturbed tranquillity'. Other historians,

doubtless born in less fortunate cities, have long smiled at his vanity. Yet was it so absurd to exalt the peaceful life of Kyme? And, much as we have gained in the summers and winters which have passed since King Edward died, do we not regret a certain loss of that peace of mind which is so delightfully if all too briefly recaptured on these pages?



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